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Relation Between Prakriti and Stress Handling Capacity: An Observational Study

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Stress is the major cause of many diseases. The list of diseases ranges from hypertension, diabetes to alcoholism. Ayurveda divides the population according to the *Prakriti* of an individual. There are seven types of *Prakriti*. Each *Prakriti* has a typical psychosomatic constitution. *Prakriti* of an individual can be assessed with the help of the characteristics that are described in ancient Ayurveda texts. Assessment of *Prakriti* can be helpful in determining the stress handling capacity of a person and ultimately helping him to keep stress-induced diseases away.

Material and method: Online survey forms of *Prakriti* and stress handling capacity were distributed to 200 students. Out of 200 students 138 responses were received. *Prakriti* and stress handling capacity was assessed from the responses received. The data was compared to look for the relationship in them, if any.

Conclusion: *Kapha* and *Pitta* found to be the most important factors in the psychosomatic composition of a person. People with the dominance of *Vata* are more prone to stress induced diseases. The occurrence of stress induced diseases can be reduced with proper stress management.

Key Words: Prakriti, Stress, Stress handling, Psychosomatic constitution, Stress-induced diseases

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the system of Indian medicine, uses the assessment tool for individual examination of a person. This tool is known as *Prakriti*.¹ According to Ayurveda, the definition of perfect health is as follows; when all the *Dosha* -vital elements including hormones and biochemical secretions in the human body, *Dhatu* - all the tissues in the human body, *Agni*² -capacity of a person to make the ingested food available for all the tissues and *mala* - waste products in the human body in a person are in equilibrium along with a cheerful soul and mind, he is said to be in the condition of perfect health.³ Cheerful mind is equally important for a healthy state of a person.⁴ Mind, soul and body are the three pillars of a person. *Tridosha* and *Triguna* are the basic concepts of Ayurveda. *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* are the *Doshas* and they are the physical factors responsible for the healthy status of a person whereas *Triguna* i.e. *Sattva*, *Raja* and *Tama* are responsible for mental health.⁵

Tridosha is also responsible for the physical constitution of a person. Seven types of constitutions are formed with different combinations of *Doshas*. These combinations are known as *Prakriti*. These constitutions are further classified into seven types according to the dominance of the *Doshas* namely *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja*, *Kaphavataja*, *Kaphapittaja*, *Vatapittaja* and *Sama Prakriti*.⁶ *Vataja*, *Pittaja*, *Kaphaja* *Prakriti*, and *Sama Prakriti* occur in less population whereas *Kaphavataja*, *Kaphapittaja*, and *Vatapittaja* are more common.

Physical and mental characters of each *Prakriti* are described in Ayurveda. Characteristic features of physical *Prakriti* include physical qualities as well as psychological qualities.⁷

The capacity to manage stress is different in each individual. Stress handling capacity (SHC) can vary along with the types of *Prakriti*. This study is initiated to verify if there is any relation in *Prakriti* and SHC of a person.

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Objectives of the Study

Stress is the main etiological factor for many diseases. If we could be able to guess the SHC of a person, we would be able to prevent stress-induced diseases. The objectives of the study are to assess the *Prakriti* of the volunteers and to assess their SHC.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Population

For the present study (Ethical no-DMIMS (DU)/IEC/2020/8852) the students of either gender aged between 18–25 years and registered during the years 2018 and 2019 under the Bachelor of Ayurveda Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) were considered.

Assessment of Prakriti

We have used the “Self-assessment questionnaire” originally prepared by Kishor Patwardhan and Rashmi Sharma, modified by Piyush Kumar Tripathi, Kishor Patwardhan, and Girish Singh, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.⁸ The questionnaire has been already validated by the authors so it was used as it was available.

The questionnaire for SHC was prepared and used for the study. SHC was graded as excellent, good, average, and poor according to the scores. The questionnaire was administered online for self-assessment. It was sent to a total of 200 volunteers. Out of them, 138 responses were received. *Prakriti* and SHC were assessed using the received data. Seven types of *Prakriti* were sorted and separated. SHC of each individual was compared with their *Prakriti*.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data were collected in an excel sheet and analysed by using SPSS software (23.0 Version)

Observations:

Total of 138 responses were received out of which the number of female volunteers was 97 and the number of male volunteers was 41. The number of *Vata Prakriti* and *Pitta Prakriti* volunteers was 5 each whereas 6 volunteers had *Kapha Prakriti*. Volunteers with dual *Prakriti* were 108. 31 had *Kaphapitta*, 43 had *Kaphavata*, and 34 had *Vatapitta Prakriti*. 14 volunteers had *Sama Prakriti*.

Table 1: Type of Prakriti and Number of volunteers

Sr. no.	Prakriti	No. of volunteers
1.	Vata	5
2.	Pitta	5
3.	Kapha	6

Table 1: (Continued)

Sr. no.	Prakriti	No. of volunteers
4.	Kaphapitta	31
5.	Kaphavata	43
6.	Vatapitta	34
7.	Sama	14
8.	Total	138

Total 138 volunteers participated in the study. Numbers of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Prakriti* people were 5, 5, and 6, respectively. Dual *Prakriti* people i.e. *Kaphapitta Prakriti*, *Kaphavata Prakriti*, *Vatapitta Prakriti* were 31, 43, and 34. People with some *Prakriti* were 14.

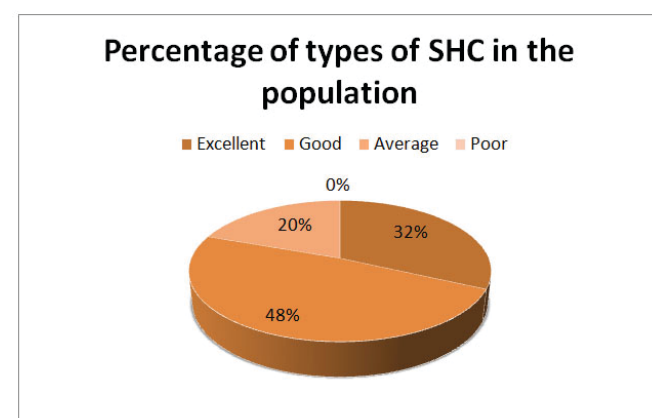


Figure 1: Percentage of types of SHC in the population.

44 (31.88%) volunteers had excellent stress handling capacity (SHC), 67 (48.55%) volunteers had good SHC, and 27 (19.57%) volunteers had average SHC. No volunteer had poor SHC.

Table 2: Prakriti Wise Distribution of Volunteers with Excellent SHC

Prakriti	Total number of volunteers with excellent SHC	Percentage of volunteers with excellent SHC (within the group)
Vata	0	0
Kapha	1	2.27
Pitta	1	2.27
Kaphapitta	16	36.36
Kaphavata	11	25.00
Vatapitta	10	22.73
Sama	5	11.36
Total	44	100

The above table no 2 shows the *Prakriti* Wise Distribution of Volunteers with Excellent SHC

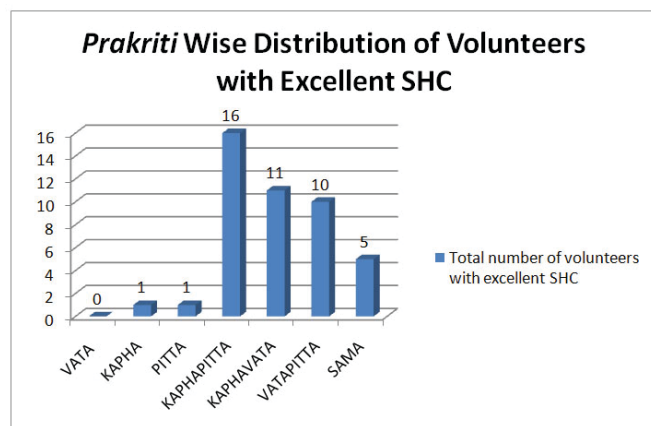


Figure 2A: *Prakriti* Wise Distribution of Volunteers with Excellent SHC.

In table no 2 and fig. no 1 showed Out of 138 participants, 44 participants had excellent SHC. Only one participant each with *Kapha* and *Pitta* *Prakriti* had excellent SHC. No person with *Vata* *Prakriti* had excellent SHC. The highest number of participants with excellent SHC was from the group of *Kaphapitta* *Prakriti*. The number of *Kaphavata* and *Vatapitta* *prakriti* with excellent SHC was 11 and 10, respectively. 5 participants with *Sama* *Prakriti* had excellent SHC.

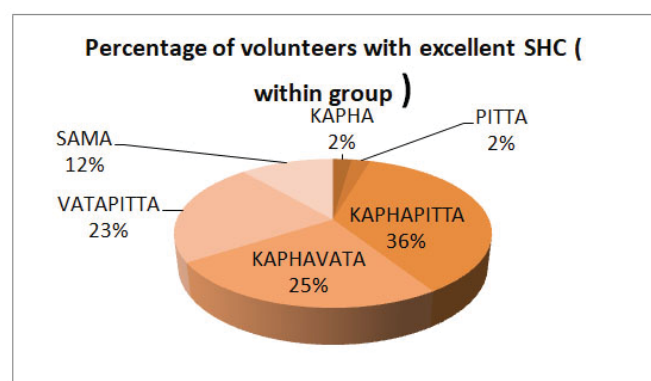


Figure 2B: Percentage of volunteers with excellent SHC (within the group).

Diag. no 2 showed Dual *Prakriti* comprise 84 % of the population of the group. *Kaphapitta* *Prakriti* people are 36.36% of the group, *Kaphavata* *Prakriti* people are 25% and *Vatapitta* *Prakriti* people are 22.27% in the group. 11.36% people with excellent SHC had *Sama* *Prakriti*.

Prakriti Wise Distribution of Volunteers with Good SHC:

Table 3: *Prakriti* Wise Distribution of Volunteers with Good SHC:

<i>Prakriti</i>	Total number of volunteers with good SHC	Percentage of volunteers with good SHC (within the group)
Vata	3	4.48
Pitta	4	7.46
Kapha	5	5.97
Kaphapitta	14	20.90
Kaphavata	21	31.34
Vatapitta	13	19.40
Sama	7	10.45
Total	67	100.00

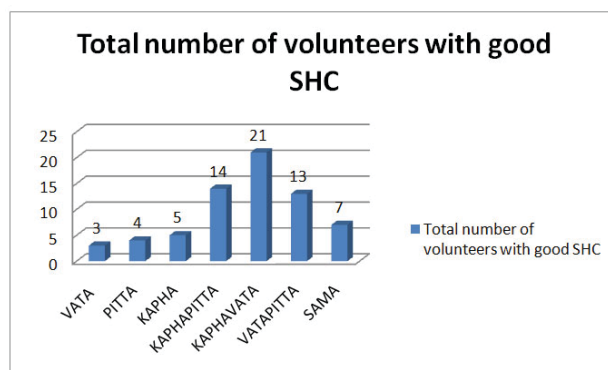


Figure 3A: Total number of volunteers with good SHC.

Table no 3 showed out of 138 participants, 67 participants had good SHC. 3, 4, and 5 participants with *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* *Prakriti* had good SHC. The highest number of participants with good SHC was from the group of *Kaphavata* *Prakriti* with 21 in number. The number of *Kaphapitta* *Prakriti* and *Vatapitta* *Prakriti* with good SHC was 14 and 13, respectively. 7 participants with *Sama* *Prakriti* had good SHC.

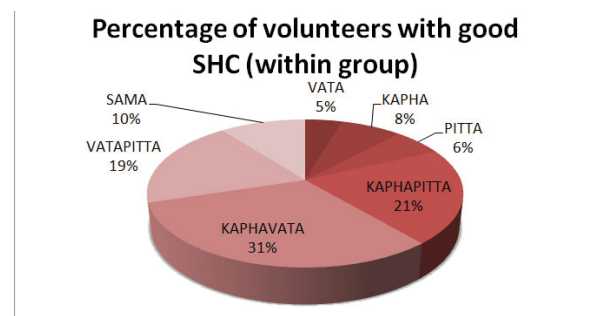


Figure 3B: Percentage of volunteers with good SHC (within the group).

Diag. no 3 showed Dual *Prakriti* comprise 71.64% of the population of the group. *Kaphapitta Prakriti* people are 20.90% of the group, *Kaphavata Prakriti* people are 31.34% and *Vatapitta Prakriti* people are 19.40% in the group. 10.45% people with good SHC had *Sama Prakriti*.

Prakriti Wise Distribution of Volunteers with Average SHC:

Table 4: Prakriti Wise Distribution of Volunteers with Average SHC

Assessment of Prakriti	Total number of volunteers with average SHC	Percentage of volunteers with average SHC within group
Vata	2	7.41
Kapha	0	0.00
Pitta	0	0.00
Kaphapitta	0	0.00
Kaphavata	12	44.44
Vatapitta	11	40.74
Sama	2	7.41
Total	27	100.00

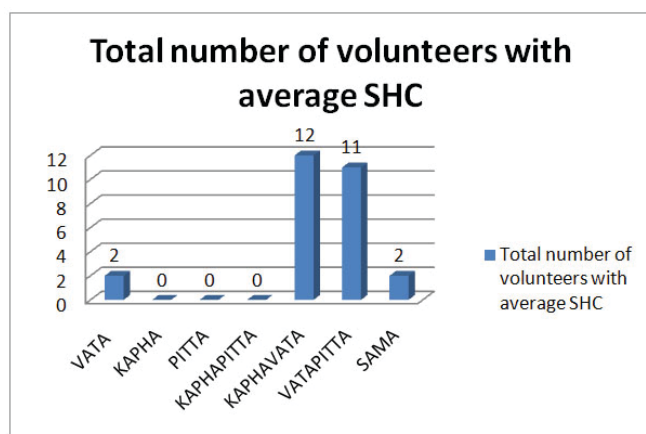


Figure 4A: Total number of volunteers with average SHC.

Table no 4 and Diag. no 4 showed out of 138 participants, 27 participants had average SHC. 2 participants with *Vata Prakriti* had average SHC. 12 participants with average SHC had *Kaphavata Prakriti*. 11 participants with *Vatapitta Prakriti* had average SHC. 2 participants with *Sama Prakriti* had average SHC.

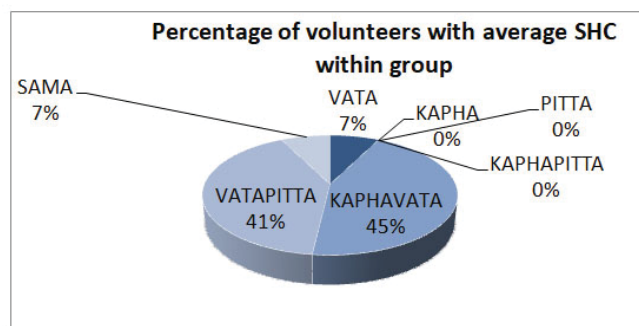


Figure 4B: Percentage of volunteers with average SHC within group.

Diag. no 4 b showed Dual *Prakriti* comprise 85.19% of the population of the group. No participant with *Kaphapitta Prakriti* said to have average SHC. *Kaphavata Prakriti* people are 44.44% and *Vatapitta Prakriti* people are 40.74% in the group. 7.41% people with average SHC had *Sama Prakriti*. No participant with *Kapha Prakriti* and *Pitta Prakriti* had average SHC.

DISCUSSION

Stress is an inevitable factor of life. One must know the management of it. When the mind is disturbed homeostasis of hormones and other vital components of the body (*Dosha*) is also disturbed. Diseases like hypertension, heart disease, diabetes are stress-induced. The psychosomatic constitution of a person describes his typical physical and psychological characteristics.

The psychological characters of *Kapha prakriti* people are that they never get angry or very depressed. They are tolerant to hardships, patient, and hardworking. They can easily forgive people. They are matured, polite, and decent people. They have good sleeping habits.⁹⁻¹¹

The psychological characters of *Pitta prakriti* people are that they are brave, mighty, and radiant people. They are not defeated easily. They are fearless, short-tempered, unsparing to the bad people whereas soft-hearted towards good people. These people have very high intellect.¹²⁻¹⁴

Vata Prakriti people are mentally unstable, jealous, hot-headed, and violent. The people of *Vata Prakriti* experience emotions like anger, fear, and irritability quicker. They tend to sleep less and the sleep pattern is not very good.¹⁵⁻¹⁷

It is very rare that a person has one *Dosha Prakriti*. People generally have dual *Dosha Prakriti*. So they have psychosomatic characters of both the *Dosha*. One *Dosha* remains dominant in dual *Dosha Prakriti*. The dominant *Dosha* has more influence on the physical and psychological qualities of a person. People with *Sama Prakriti* have mixed type of characteristics.

People with the dominance of *Kapha* are mentally strong. Their patient, tolerant, and hardworking nature makes them confident to handle difficult situations. When people have *Kapha Dosha* dominant in their constitution, they can handle stress very well. Good sleeping patterns also help them to maintain their hormone levels so that they remain calm and less stressed.¹⁸

Pitta Dosha dominant people are fearless, brave, and intelligent. Their intelligence and bravery give them the confidence to get through the challenges.¹⁹ *Vata Dosha* dominant people are mentally unstable, irritable, and coward. Due to these psychological factors, people with *Vata* dominant *Prakriti* find stress handling difficult. But if the person has *Pitta* dominant *Vatapitta Prakriti*, the person gets the benefits of *Pitta* in SHC.

The volunteers for the present study are from the BAMS Ist and IInd year students. Being students of a professional course, nobody assessed themselves extremely bad at stress handling. Hence, nobody came under the category of poor stress handlers. People with single *Dosha Prakriti* were very less in number in the sample as single *Dosha prakriti* is found very rarely.

61.36 % people with excellent stress handling had either *Kapha Vata* or *Kapha Pitta Prakriti*. People with *Kapha* dominant *Prakriti* had excellent SHC. *Vatapitta Prakriti* people were 22.73%. Out of which 15.90% had *Pitta* dominant *Prakriti*. No person with *Vata Prakriti* had excellent SHC.

52.24% people in good SHC group had *Kapha Vata* or *Kapha Pitta Prakriti*. *Kapha Vata Prakriti* people were maximum in number in good SHC. The group of *Kapha Pitta prakriti* people was on the second number in this group also. People of the *Vata Pitta Prakriti* were least in the dual *Prakriti* group with good SHC. The number of *Kapha pitta prakriti* people moved to the second position in the good SHC group. The *Kapha Pitta Prakriti* people assessed themselves as excellent in SHC; hence the number in this was reduced.

Interestingly, there was not a single person of *Kapha*, *Pitta*, or *Kapha Pitta Prakriti* who assessed themselves as average in SHC. The average SHC group had a dominant presence of *Kapha Vata*, *Pitta Vata Prakriti*, *Vata* and *Sama Prakriti*. The dual *Prakriti* was *Vata* dominant. The psychosomatic characteristics of *Vata Dosha* manifest in the form of bad SHC. Certain systemic conditions need careful attention like diabetes²⁰⁻²⁵, hypertension²⁶⁻³⁴, respiratory and renal disorders³⁵⁻⁴¹. Many other related articles are available⁴²⁻⁵³.

CONCLUSION

Aptitude test, IQ test is very common assessment tools in our society for many years. If we assess the *Prakriti* of the people at early age, we can get a clue about their SHC. Stress

management is very important in this modern world. The young generation is under tremendous stress due to their education, carrier, and jobs. With the help of correct *Prakriti* assessment, we can avoid stress-induced diseases.

Scope for further study

Bigger sample size can be taken for more accuracy.

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Conflict of interest: None

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